

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 IO-13 SAJ-01 DHA-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 /082 W

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P R 261716Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0695

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PBOR GW GE

SUBJECT: INCIDENTS ON FRG-GDR BOUNDARY

1. TWO JULY 24 INCIDENTS ON THE FRG/GDR BORDER HAVE RESULTED IN CHARGES AND COUNTER CHARGES BETWEEN THE TWO GERMAN STATES. THE MOST SERIOUS INCIDENT OCCURRED NEAR RATZBURG (JUST SOUTH OF LUEBECK) WHEN A 49 YEAR OLD HAMBURG RESIDENT NAMED WILLY BUBBER WAS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED BY GDR BORDER GUARDS WHEN HE ALLEGEDLY CROSSED INTO EAST GERMAN TERRITORY UP TO THE UP TO THE HEAVY FENCE WHICH LIES WELL INSIDE THE GDR. HE IS NOW IN AN EAST GERMAN HOSPITAL. THE SECOND INCIDENT OCCURRED NEAR KASSEL WHEN A 37 YEAR OLD GERMAN VACATIONER, HIS SIX YEAR OLD SON, AND A 38 YEAR OLD DUTCH TOURIST WERE TAKEN PRISONER APPARENTLY ON GDR TERRITORY AND LED AWAY BLINDFOLDED UNDER GDR GUNPOINT. THESE THREE WERE RETURNED TO THE GDR AFTER SEVERAL HOURS OF REPORTEDLY INTENSE QUESTIONING.

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2. THE GDR IS ASSERTING IN BOTH CASES THAT THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED HAD CROSSED INTO GDR TERRITORY IN A PROVOCATIVE WAY. ADN CLAIMS THAT BUBBER HAD SHOUTED PROVOCATIONS AT GDR BORDER TROOPS AND HAD IGNORED WARNINGS THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO ENTER THE GDR. IN WHAT MIGHT BE AN ATTEMPT TO AROUSE SUSPICIONS ABOUT HIS ACTIVITIES ON THE BORDER, THE EAST GERMANS ARE ALSO CLAIMING THAT HE HAD NO IDENTITY DOCUMENTS IN HIS POSSESSION WHEN TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.

3. FRG PERMREP IN EAST BERLIN GAUS HAS PROTESTED THE INCIDENTS IN THE GDR FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE HAS ALSO ASKED FOR PERMISSION TO VISIT THE WOUNDED MAN. THE EAST GERMANS COUNTER PROTESTED BUBBER'S ALLEGED BEHAVIOR. FRG GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN BOELLING HAS STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE SHOOTING ON THE BORDER. BOELLING ALSO CONTRASTED GDR ATTEMPTS TO PICTURE ITSELF AS A CIVILIZED ADVANCED STATE WITH THE HEAVY-HANDED GDR ACTIONS ON THE BORDER. SPD SPOKESMAN SCHWARTZ ADDED THAT SUCH ACTS DAMAGE THE GDR'S IMAGE IN THE ENTIRE FREE WORLD. THEY PROVE THE WEAKNESS OF THE GDR REGIME. INTERIOR MINISTER MAIHOFFER HAS CONDEMNED THE GDR ACTIONS AS A VIOLATION OF NORMAL PRACTICES ON THE BOUNDARIES OF CIVILIZED STATES. HE SAID IT WAS UNACCEPTABLE THAT CIVILIANS BE LED AWAY FROM BORDER INCIDENTS OF THIS KIND AS IF THEY WERE PRISONERS OF WAR.

4. THE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION IS DEMANDING A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE FRG/GDR BORDER COMMISSION AND CDU/CSU BUNDESTAG WHIP REDDEMANN HAS STATED THAT IT IS NOW UNAVOIDABLY NECESSARY TO UNDERTAKE ACTIONS WHICH WILL HAVE THE GOAL OF LIFTING THE GDR SHOOTING ORDER ON THE BORDER. CDU BUNDESTAG DEPUTY LEICHT, CHAIRMAN OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE, HAS REPORTEDLY STATED THAT THE SWING CREDIT ARRANGEMENT SHOULD BE SUSPENDED.

5. PRESS PLAY HAS BEEN HEAVY. THE STORIES AND EDITORIALS HAVE FOCUSSED ON THE ALLEGED TRIGGER-HAPPINESS OF THE EAST GERMAN GUARDS WHO APPEARED TO HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHOT A MAN WITH LITTLE OR NO PROVOCATION. EDITORIALS HAVE BITTERLY ATTACKED THE EAST GERMAN ACTION AND HAVE RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH INCIDENTS FOR FURTHER EAST-WEST GERMAN RELATIONS. DIE WELT HAS REPORTED THAT A WEST GERMAN CUSTOMS OFFICIAL SAW THE INCIDENT AND TRIED TO ASSIST BUBBER AFTER BUBBER HAD BEEN SHOT. ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOMS OFFICIAL, THE EAST GERMANS FIRED SOME WARNING SHOTS

TO PREVENT HIM FROM HELPING BUBBER BUT THEN TOOK AN
HOUR BEFORE THEY WERE ABLE TO MOVE BUBBER
THROUGH A HOLE IN THE FENCE. DIE WELT ALSO REPORTED
THAT EAST GERMANY HAD CREATED A NEW BORDER PATROL FORCE
DESIGNED TO OPERATE IN THE NO MAN'S LAND BETWEEN THE
ACTUAL BORDER AND THE FENCE. WEST GERMAN SOURCES TO
WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN SO FAR DO NOT KNOW OF ANY EVIDENCE

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OF SUCH A FORCE.

6. AS PART OF THE WEST GERMAN REACTION, THERE WAS A
TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION AND PROTEST DEMONSTRATION ON
SUNDAY EVENING AT THE BORDER NEAR WHERE BUBBER WAS SHOT.
SEVERAL POLITICAL LEADERS, INCLUDING OLAF VON WRANGEL
OF THE CDU-, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BUNDESTAG INTRA-
GERMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, DENOUNCED THE EAST GERMAN ACTION

AND CALLED UPON THE FRG TO RAISE THE EAST GERMAN
PRACTICES AT THE UNITED NATIONS AS A VIOLATION OF HUMAN
RIGHTS.

7. COMMENT. THESE INCIDENTS AGAIN WILL RAISE QUESTIONS
IN MANY MINDS ABOUT THE MORAL JUSTIFICATION FOR FRG-
GDR RELATIONS SO LONG AS THE GDR MAINTAINS BORDER
POLICIES THAT LEAD TO SUCH INCIDENTS. THEY CANNOT
HELP BUT BE UNWELCOME TO THE BONN COALITION, WHICH
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WOULD LIKE TO DEMONSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS AND THE
POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES OF OSTPOLITIK DURING AN ELECTION
YEAR. WE WILL REPORT BY SEPTEL THE SPECIFIC REACTIONS
AND ANALYSES OF FRG OFFICIALS AFTER FURTHER CONVERSATIONS
WITH THEM.
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